

**14. SNIE 37-89, November, 1989, *Afghanistan: The War in Perspective*
(Key Judgments only)**



**Director of
Central
Intelligence**

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SNIE 37-89

**Afghanistan: The War
in Perspective (C-NF)**

*Information available as of November 1989 was used
in the preparation of this Special National Intelligence Estimate.*

*The following intelligence organizations participated
in the preparation of this Estimate:*

The Central Intelligence Agency
The Defense Intelligence Agency
The National Security Agency
The Bureau of Intelligence and Research,
Department of State

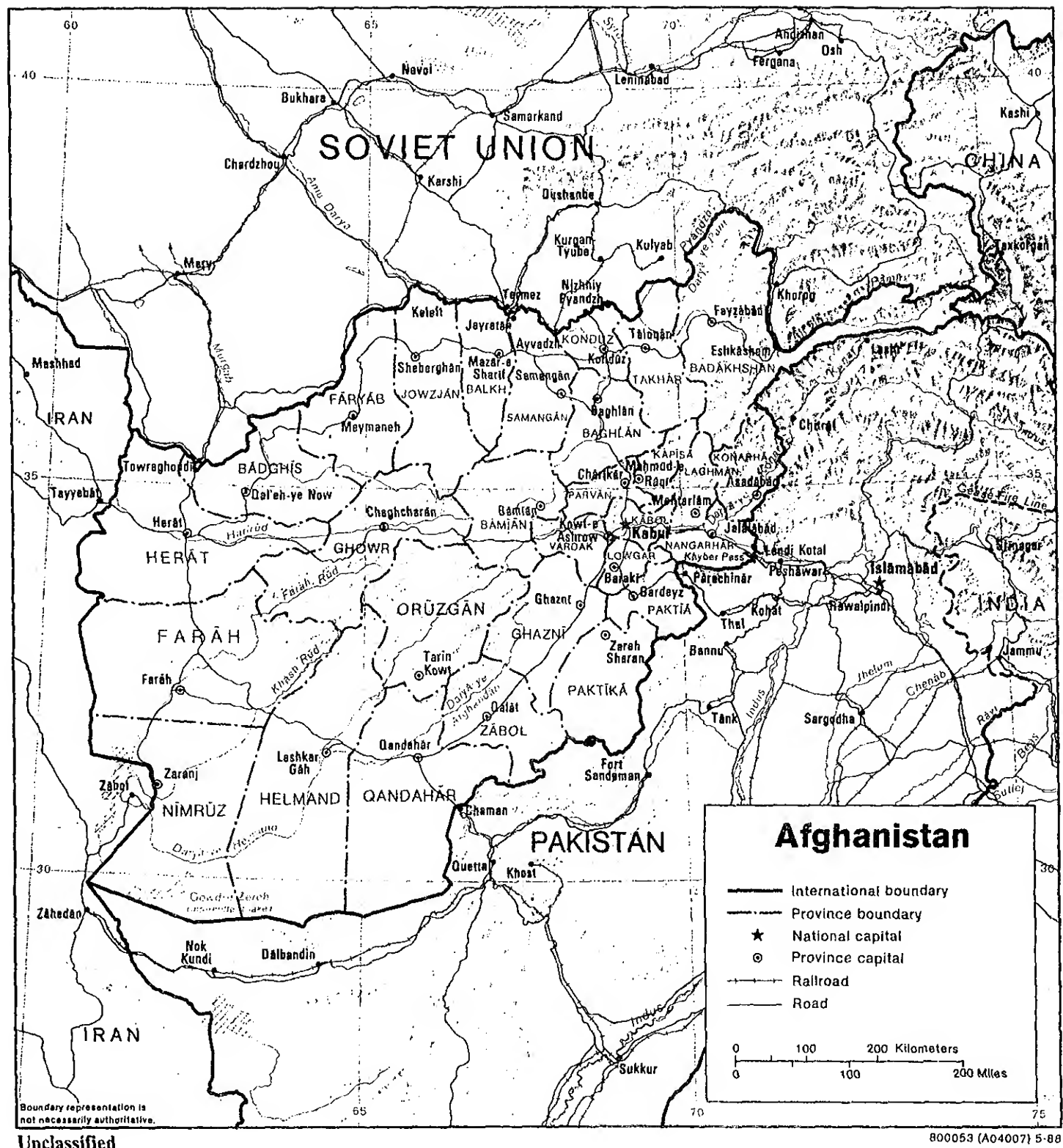
also participating:

The Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
Department of the Army
The Director of Naval Intelligence,
Department of the Navy
The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence,
Department of the Air Force

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Key Judgments

The Kabul regime is weak, unpopular, and factionalized, but it will probably remain in power over the next 12 months. The war will remain at a near impasse. The regime will continue to resist Mujahedin pressure so long as the Soviet Union remains willing and able to continue its massive military supply program and the regime's internal problems remain manageable:

- The Mujahedin hold the military initiative *to the extent that* they move unhindered by the regime in most of the countryside and they choose when and where to fight. The resistance, however, will be unable to prevent the supply of Soviet materiel to regime forces. The resistance will remain a guerrilla force and will find it difficult to seize major regime garrisons.
- This conflict is best understood as an insurgency. Political/military elements, such as regime fragility, Mujahedin disunity, and local tribal factors will be at least as important to the final outcome as strictly military considerations.
- Despite extensive popular support, the highly factionalized resistance is unlikely to form a political entity capable of uniting the Mujahedin.
- The Afghan Interim Government and most major commanders will refuse to negotiate directly with Kabul, barring the departure of Najibullah and top regime officials, but we cannot rule out the possibility of indirect talks.

Pakistan will continue to support the resistance, whether Benazir Bhutto or her political opposition is in power. (S NF)

The Soviets will continue to search for a political settlement while providing massive support to Kabul over the next year. Soviet moves could include a dramatic new initiative, especially if Gorbachev saw it as a way to remove the Afghan issue from the US-Soviet agenda before the summit next year. ~~(S NF)~~

One way to break the impasse would be to alter the pattern of foreign support:

- A unilateral US cutoff of support to the resistance would alter the military balance in favor of the regime and give it the upper hand in dictating the terms of political arrangements.

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- A unilateral Soviet cutoff of support to the regime would be devastating to Kabul's prospects.
- Mutual cuts by the United States and Soviet Union (negative symmetry) would be unpopular with the resistance but ultimately more damaging to the regime.
- Even with aid cuts, conflict would probably continue indefinitely, though at a lower level of intensity. ~~(S+NF)~~

To reduce its vulnerability to determined efforts by the resistance to bring it down, the regime is likely to continue to seek separate deals with local resistance commanders. ~~(S+NF)~~

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